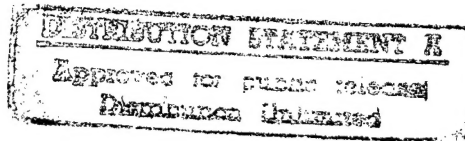


JPRS-NEA-92-143
28 October 1992



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JPRS Report



Near East & South Asia

BANGLADESH

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Near East & South Asia

BANGLADESH

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International Affairs

Commentary Supports Calls For UNSC Expansion, Reforms

BK2310164492 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network
in English 1530 GMT 23 Oct 92

[Station commentary]

[Text] There is now a persistent demand to restructure the Security Council in view of the wide-ranging political changes around the globe. The Cold War has ended with the dismantling of a superpower—the former Soviet Union. The balance of power concept, which so long has reportedly kept the world (?scared) of a nuclear conflict, has been replaced by a unipolarity with totally different geopolitical consequences. In a similar manner, it can be argued that there are other criteria for evaluating a country's influence on global situation apart from its arsenals of nuclear weapons. The economic strengths of countries are now vital factors in the interplay of international forces. There is also the demographic size of a country. A vast nation cannot be kept outside the ambit of global politics as it takes place in the United Nations merely because it is poor and its people have a low per capital income. There are also the so-called economic superpowers, namely Germany and Japan. Both these countries were defeated in World War II and, therefore, their positions in the UN were determined by the outcome of the global conflict. It is obvious that there is no reason now to keep these economic giants outside the highest UN body, the Security Council. In fact, if these nations are made permanent members of the council, they could be made more responsible players in the global maintenance of peace. Only recently, Japan agreed to send troops to join the UN peacekeeping forces in Cambodia.

Bangladesh is the latest country to join the worldwide demand to reform the UN against the backdrop of the new changes. The Bangladesh permanent representative at the UN in a statement said the world body must play a more effective and decisive role in the maintenance of global peace and stability. This will require that all countries are fairly represented in the UN. There is a growing opinion that the power of veto to a handful of countries is working against the interest of the majority of countries and is, therefore, contrary to the efforts to make the UN more effective and democratic. There are instances when the veto power has been unjustifiably applied to protect the narrow national interests of the countries exercising vetoing authority. Questions are being asked concerning the efficacy of the vetoing authority of the Security Council in the changed global context. As the world body assumes a high profile in international politics, the special privileges of a few countries will be even more questioned. The UN became involved in global politics in a more definite manner since the Gulf war. The action against Iraq had been sanctioned by the Security Council and so other current measures adopted to reduce Iraq's future war capability.

The changed global situation has also highlighted the need for focusing attention on the economic plight of developing countries. The UN must also increase its role on the

global economic front and lift a large number of impoverished countries from the morass of poverty. The UN must ensure that there are enough transfers of capital resources from the surplus to the deficit countries. It must take measures on a global plane to facilitate the transfer of appropriate technology to the least developed countries. For these new responsibilities, again the world body must be reformed. An organization which was set up at the advent of the Cold War must now undergo changes to maintain its relevance.

Participation in Nonaligned Meet Reported

Zia Speech Text

93AS0092A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 3 Sep 92 p 2

[Speech by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the first plenary session of the 10th Nonaligned Summit in Jakarta: "Political, Economic Security to All Nations Must Be Ensured"; boldface words as published]

[Text] Jakarta, Sept. 1—Following is the full text of Speech by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the first plenary session of the tenth nonaligned summit being held at the Jakarta convention centre:

**Bismillahir Rahmaner Rahim
President Soeharto,
Your Majesties,
Your Highnesses,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assala Mu Alaikum.

I am truly delighted to be here in this beautiful city of Jakarta, among brotherly Indonesian people. I deem it a privilege to participate in this momentous Tenth Non-aligned Summit. Organizing this Conference was a tremendous task. You undertook this with praiseworthy success. It is a compliment to your own dynamism. It also reflects Indonesia's commitment to the Movement. The reception accorded to me and my delegation has been most gracious and warm. I am deeply touched.

We meet at a crucial confluence of time and history. Our Movement has reached a vital turning point. We are on the threshold of a new Century. We are about to enter a new era. We hope it will bring our peoples a more just, peaceful, and prosperous life—in short, a better future for all of us.

Mr. Chairman,

Your inaugural address has been inspiring. It has outlined the challenges and opportunities that we face. It has identified the issues we must address. It has provided us with fresh ideas to make our Movement both relevant and resurgent. We pay you warm tributes.

We are pleased that once again your great country should be at our helm. Imbued by the principles of Panchashila, Indonesia has led and guided us in the past with distinction. All of us recall Bandung and its spirit with nostalgia. I have every confidence that your Chairmanship will be a

historic one. It will provide our Movement with added impetus and renewed vigour.

Mr. Chairman,

Criticism of NAM [Nonaligned Movement] is nothing new. It has been a consistent feature since the Movement began. Its detractors hold that some NAM members are "most aligned". They argue that the end of the Cold War has made it irrelevant to our times. They point to its lack of unity, coherence, and a clear-cut decision-making process. Some even question its utility.

But may I stress my sincere faith in the Movement's continuing relevance. Indeed, it is a very real force at this time and age. Its very composition reflects the views of the great majority of States in the world. It represents in a real sense the conscience of mankind.

The principles on which the Nonaligned Movement was founded in 1961 are still valid. They sought to improve international relations, to forsake the policy of force and to resolve pending world conflicts through peaceful means. The Movement was geared, not so much to governments', but to peoples' yearning for peace, dignity, tolerance, progress, freedom and a better life. These are also the critical ingredients of the U.N. Charter, to which NAM is deeply committed.

Unlike in the past, major political and economic issues of our times are no longer decided in a few capitals. Over a hundred nations participate. The democratisation of international relations has been a key objective of the Movement. NAM sought to prevent the Cold War from turning hot by pursuing an independent path, free from bloc rivalry. It aimed at eradicating colonialism and eliminating racism. It was not merely a gathering of like-minded States. It was a voluntary association of nations, pursuing an independent path to decide issues based on their merits, and striving to achieve a just world order free of the use of force.

Mr. Chairman,

The world, of late, has witnessed dramatic transformations. The Movement must respond to these changes. It must devise ways and means to shape this transition to achieve its goals. This Summit must review and revive NAM's role in this task. It must forge together an effective and comprehensive programme of action.

Massive pressures today have redefined relations among States. Historic confrontations have ended, but new ones have begun. There have been both positive and negative developments, of direct relevance to the Movement. On the one hand, ideological walls have broken down, and democracy has triumphed. On the other, ethnic rivalries have surfaced, and bloody civil wars are raging. In the arms, there is also a marked decrease in restraint and a proliferation of new kinds of global threats. While there is a growing concern for environment, there is also a wanton disregard for it. We see more and more representative and caring governments coming to power. We also witness oppression, discrimination and civil strife forcing large numbers of people to flee their frontiers.

The NAM countries must work in concert in the face of these contradictions. They must not be marginalized politically or economically. NAM's diversity and broad based representative character makes it a powerful forum for dialogue and consensus building. The credibility of its political role has already been demonstrated by its tenacity in the struggle against colonialism and racism.

Mr. Chairman,

NAM stands for peace with justice. It demands that each country determines its own destiny without outside interference. This has been dramatically brought home as Afghanistan and Cambodia move towards the resolution of their problems. NAM must contribute its best to end the continuing civil strife in these countries. It must lead the way to peace and progress through national reconciliation.

Palestine continues to remain a major void. The Gulf War demonstrated a unique convergence of views in the world community. It was to reject the right of the strong to aggress against the weak. It also enhanced our awareness of the dangers of using differing standards in international relations. It revealed the inherent folly in allowing Israel to continue its illegal occupation of Arab lands. We welcome the peace-initiative underway and praise the constructive participation of the Arab delegations. We urge upon Israel not to miss this vital opportunity.

We welcome the developments in South Africa towards a free, democratic and multi-racial government. We express concern at the breakdown in talks. We deplore the outbreak of violence there. We stress the need to keep up the pressure for dismantling apartheid. We look forward to the evolution of a new Constitution based on the freely expressed will of the people, the U.N. Charter, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The disintegration of former Yugoslavia and the resultant violence have caused us great anguish. The tragedy that is being enacted in the unfortunate region must be brought to a close. The brutalities on the innocent people of Bosnia and Herzegovina must come to an end. Relief must reach the needy at all costs. NAM must stand by the Security Council resolution in this respect.

Mr. Chairman,

NAM's foremost concern must remain that of ensuring political and economic security to all nations, both weak and strong, large and small. While detente has advanced solutions to some regional conflicts, opposing forces are also at work. Cooperation among big powers must not be seen as a license to encourage regional hegemony. Peace-keeping and peacemaking role of the U.N. must be complemented by NAM's efforts in regional disarmament and confidence-building measures. Reduced reliance on military security must be backed by measures to monitor, regulate and limit the arms trade; by strengthening the NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty] regime and through such positive concepts as zones of peace and nuclear free zones.

At the same time, we must build on the principles of international law and global justice. These must cover crucial issues of scarce water resources, environment, refugees, economic migrants and displaced persons. At the national level, a minimum defence combined with an

innovative use of the armed forces for social development could lead to a purposeful release of the so-called peace-dividend. Meanwhile, we must promote the concept of preventive diplomacy through improving the capacity to anticipate and contain damage in times of man-made or natural disasters.

Mr. Chairman,

The flowering of democracy and political pluralism across the world in recent times is a matter of great satisfaction to all of us. This new development, at the same time, has underscored the link among democracy, development and human rights. It is, therefore, imperative that we concentrate on harnessing durable structures of democracy through economic cooperation.

Our search for peace and security will remain elusive if economic stagnation, deprivation and disparities persist. The emergence of new trade blocs, the rise in protectionism, volatile exchange and high interest rates have contributed to the debt crisis. These have also reduced capital flows and investment. There is a pressing need for an early conclusion of the Uruguay Round. There should be a meaningful resumption of the North-South dialogue. The development perspective must be put in sharper focus than the theme of adjustment that now tends to overshadow it.

Improvement of the lot of the Least Developed Countries [LDC] must remain a top priority. Poverty, overpopulation and environmental degradation impede their development efforts. Our Movement must support the relevant recommendations of the Second U.N. Conference on LDCs in Paris in 1990. We must evolve new strategies towards poverty alleviation and enhanced growth. Social aspects of development are important, particularly for those disadvantaged groups that economic growth tends to bypass. In this context women and children deserve special attention.

The Movement must support the follow-up actions in the post-Earth Summit period. The Rio Declaration, the Conventions on Biodiversity and Climate Change, the Principles on Forestry and Agenda 21 mark a significant change in mankind's attitude towards Nature and environment. For developing countries, the implementation of these documents will require new, additional and adequate resources. These must be made available. A new kind of partnership must be forged between developed and developing countries. Surely, our Movement has a crucial role to play in this endeavour.

Mr. Chairman,

The Movement must not only respond to changes. It must also influence them where necessary. This calls for a reassessment by ourselves of our potentials. We need to thoroughly examine NAM's role, rationale and orientation. Should our thrust be political or economic? Should we have a General Secretariat? Should our procedures be simplified and stream-lined? How can we make ourselves more action-oriented and business-like? To this end, the contribution of our Ministerial Committee on Methodology deserves special praise. Also, our credibility will be

enhanced if we practise what we preach. Our long-standing intramural disputes must be resolved peacefully and urgently.

We have no option, at this decisive moment of the Movement's history, but to face the future with solidarity, commitment, imagination and innovation. If the vision of our founding fathers is to be transformed into reality, we must all work with sincerity and dedication. Your own responsibilities, Mr. Chairman, in this respect are onerous. May I assure you, however, Mr. Chairman that you shall have Bangladesh's unflinching support in your stewardship of our Movement.

Thank you all.

Talks With Pakistan's Sharif

93AS0092B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 2 Sep 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Jakarta, Sept. 1—Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today underlined the need for implementing the agreements reached between Bangladesh and Pakistan during her recent state visit to Pakistan, reports BSS.

She told this to Pakistan Prime Minister Newaz Sharif who called on her at the Jakarta Convention Centre (JCC) here this evening.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, who was present during the meeting, told BSS that Prime Minister Begum Zia laid stress on further strengthening the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] for cooperation among the seven nations.

Both the leaders agreed to exchange the visits of cultural teams between the two countries, Rahman said.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister also invited Pakistan Premier Newaz Sharif to visit Bangladesh. The visit might take place in the first half of the next year.

Mr. Rahman further said the two leaders also discussed the issues concerning Nonaligned Movement and other bilateral and regional issues during the meeting, which was held in a cordial atmosphere.

Talks With India's Rao

93AS0092C Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
3 Sep 92 pp 1, 8

[Excerpt] Jakarta—Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia raised the water sharing issue between Bangladesh and India with her Indian counterpart Narashima Rao when the two leaders met here yesterday.

During the meeting which lasted for 35 minutes, Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Zia stressed the need for reaching a short term water sharing arrangement between the two countries.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said that the short term arrangement would create a psychological climate for moving towards the long-term water sharing arrangements between Bangladesh and India.

Begum Zia said long-term arrangements are most important as far as the water sharing problem is concerned.

Begum Zia also informed the Indian Prime Minister of the adverse effects of the Farakka barrage on the Bangladesh northern parts.

In reply to Begum Zia's observations on water sharing, Indian Prime Minister Narashima Rao referred to the recent ministerial meetings between the two countries and said India would examine to find ways to resolve problem. On the Chakma refugee problem Mr Rao said India did not want any Chakma refugee to stay in his country. Mr Rao said he wanted the early solution to this problem. Begum Zia said she had visited the hill tracts several times and Bangladesh had made necessary arrangements so that the Chakma refugees could return to their home.

She also recalled her recent visit to India and invited Indian Premier to pay a state visit to Bangladesh.

During the meeting the two leaders also underlined the need for strengthening SAARC for better cohesion among the member nations. [passage omitted]

Regional Affairs

Talks Held With Indian Foreign Secretary

93AS0088A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
23 Aug 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] The visiting Indian Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit yesterday held formal talks with his Bangladesh counterpart, Mr. Reaz Rahman discussing ways and means to reach understanding outstanding bilateral issues including Ganges waters sharing and the big trade gap between the two neighbouring countries.

All the irritants standing in the way of good neighbourly relations came up at the talks that lasted two and a half hours between the two foreign secretaries. Mr. Reaz Rahman led a ten member Bangladesh team while Mr. Dixit headed a seven-member delegation from his country at the talks.

According to a Foreign Ministry spokesman, the Indian Foreign Secretary at the talks "reassured" the Bangladesh side that India would not assist any insurgency against Bangladesh from its soil when the two top Foreign Ministry officials took up prickly insurgent activities by the outlawed Shanti Bahini elements from across the Indian border along with the issue of repatriation of the remaining Chakma tribal refugees from Indian camps in Tripura state.

The talks took place as routine matters following Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman's visit to Delhi a few months ago on various aspects of bilateral issues. Bangladesh High Commissioner to India, Faruk Sobhan, is already in Dhaka to attend the talks.

About sharing of the common river Ganges waters, the Indian Foreign Secretary referred to the coming visit of the Indian Irrigation Minister V.C. Shukla to Dhaka for attending ministerial-level talks from August 25. Bangladesh Agricultural and Water Resources and Irrigation Minister Major General (retd) M. Majidul Huq had visited Delhi in May last and had talks with his Indian counterpart, Mr. Shukla in this regard.

The ministerial-level talks in Dhaka are expected to yield some positive results as the two foreign secretaries took rather an overview of the situation.

BSS adds: The talks at the level of the Foreign Secretaries also covered other matters of common interest like the coming nonaligned summit in Jakarta and the next SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit in Dhaka a Foreign spokesman said.

The Dhaka talks were "significant" since they are taking place after the summit level talks between the two countries in New Delhi about three months ago and also for the reason that Bangladesh is set to host the next SAARC summit in December.

The meeting also assumed additional importance since the 20th Nonaligned Conference is round the corner and the two SAARC nations discussed issues concerning it so that they could harmonise their positions and act in concert, the spokesman said.

Bilateral issues like the sharing of waters, land boundary accord of 1974, the handing over of the "Tin Bigha" corridor to Bangladesh, return of the Chakma refugees from India and the situation in the Hill Tracts and trade relations figured prominently in the talks, said the spokesman.

"The talks were useful since a qualitative change has taken place in the general atmosphere of bilateral ties with the institution of a democratic government in Bangladesh," he said.

The spokesman said the two present governments in Bangladesh and India took over at the same time and this synchronisation helped the two countries to approach the bilateral issues in a more pragmatic manner for their solution.

The "Tin Bigha" issue had been resolved and Bangladesh had been able to exercise its right for the first time in last 18 years, he said.

The Commerce Minister of Bangladesh visited India early this month and had talks on bilateral trade including removing the balance of trade which is heavily adverse against Bangladesh.

The imbalance is worth 1.36 billion dollars over the last 20 years.

Two Foreign Secretaries welcomed the extension of trade accord by the Commerce Ministers for a further period of three years from October next.

On the Chittagong Hill Tracts issue, Dhaka informed New Delhi of its relentless efforts to bring back the Chakma refugees from camps in India and some of its actions had been welcomed by the other side, the spokesman said.

The implementation of the 1974 land boundary accord also came up for discussions with the objective of its full implementation.

All these positive signs followed the talks that the Prime Ministers of two countries had in New Delhi in May last, the spokesman said.

About the coming nonaligned summit, they agreed to work in concert to make the NAM [Non-Aligned Movement] more pragmatic while agreeing that the relevance of the movement today remains as important as when it was founded in 1961.

Paper Criticizes India's Deportation Policy

БК0910123192 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 27 Sep 92 p 5

[Editorial: "Operation Push Back"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Last two weeks' most important bilateral development between Bangladesh and India has been what the latter calls Operation Push Back of Bengali-speaking Indian citizens into Bangladesh. Bangladesh's security border guards have foiled some of these push-backs. As a result these deportees, unwanted in India and unaccepted by Bangladesh, have been placed in the most unenviable situation imaginable. For the most part poor their fate, in a sense, is far worse than those being forced out of Bosnia (in the Balkans) though ethnic-cleansing by the Serbs, minus, however, the slaughter that accompanies the Serbian push.

In the meantime West Bengal government (in India) has been among those who have protested the Push Back. Political and intellectual quarters and the general public in Bangladesh have reacted with shock and surprise.

What intrigues most in Bangladesh in that so late as the 90s of the century, India should have suddenly discovered that nearly six hundred thousand illegal Bangladeshi immigrants need to be pushed back into their original country and that the move is to be carried out nakedly by force rather than through normal diplomatic channels. That is, if at all the question is one to be a subject for such bilateral diplomatic negotiation. But the fact is it is obviously an issue newly created and seems to be designed to almost reverse the course already set in the May Summit between Prime Minister Mr. Rao of India and Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, of improving relations.

The greater element of surprise in the 'Operation Push Back' launched by India is that Mr. Rao's government could at all be a party to it. In the summit held in May Mr. Rao's assurances of not "letting Bangladesh down" could hardly be compatible with what by all accounts is a xenophobic campaign.

As the largest democracy in the world India's best credential is that it is a multilingual, multireligious and multiracial country held together by its consistent adherence to principles of democracy and that Indian National Congress' stand for democratic values has also been consistently preserved so far amid hostile moves by communal or other sectarian groups trying to scupper it. Prime Minister Rao's handling of one of the most explosive religious issues (the temple dispute) has earned him a reputation as the staunchest leader of democracy in India. Long-standing problems of bilateral importance between India and Bangladesh such as 'Tinbigha' has been resolved through the initiative from Delhi. Other issues, mainly the water-sharing of the Ganges, is also being seriously discussed at

appropriate diplomatic levels, hopefully, for an early solution. The 'Operation Push Back' therefore comes as an unnecessary and avoidable spanner in the works.

Apart from democratic imperatives which India is ill-placed to ignore the so-called deportees have enjoyed for years the rights of bona fide citizens including that of exercising their franchise in national elections. Think of the United States with the world's most diverse races, languages and colours embarking on a campaign like 'Operation Push Back' (thousands of Mexican and other neighbouring nationals form part of the US citizenry). It will be an earth-shaking event overturning democracy at a stroke and that in the most successful democracy in history.

As a leading country in the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] group there are certainly new expectations raised by the great political change that has swept the best part of the world. Cynical moves like 'Operation Push Back' will certainly put a strain on the potential (and emerging) SAARC fraternity that many expect has been slowly building up with India eschewing much of its traditional unfriendliness towards most of its neighbours, particularly an harmless, poor, friendly Bangladesh.

The recent signs of the two countries drawing closer to each other have been welcome in the political, intellectual and diplomatic circles of both countries. The rapport and conciliation which these pointed to need to be sustained rather than so rudely or cynically disrupted. We also expect the Indian press including the distinguished columnists to make their voice heard against such undemocratic slides in its political behaviour. Mr. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao for his part is expected to do a little rethinking and call off this patently undemocratic "push" which is a clear violation of human rights, and other fundamental democratic values.

Finance Minister's Visit to Calcutta Reported

93AS0090A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 2 Sep 92 p 10

[Text] Calcutta, Sept. 1—Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman, who made a stopover in Calcutta on his way to Delhi, called on West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu at his office at Writers' Building here today, reports BSS.

During the meeting Mr. Saifur Rahman exchanged views with the West Bengal Chief Minister on expansion of trade and commerce between the two countries. The Finance Minister underlined the importance of increased imports by India from Bangladesh to minimise the existing trade imbalance in favour of India.

They discussed the possibility of setting up joint venture industries in Bangladesh by Indian investors. They also stressed the need for increased exchanges in various fields to improve further the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Cooperation in the fields of pisciculture, poultry and dairy farming, in which West Bengal has made considerable progress, also came up for discussion.

Finance Minister of West Bengal Dr. Asim Das Gupta, Bangladesh Finance Secretary Mr. Nasimuddin Ahmed, Chief Secretary of West Bengal Mr. N. Krishnamurthi, Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta, Syed Noor Hossain and senior officials of the West Bengal Government were present.

Earlier the Finance Minister had a luncheon meeting with the senior members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry at their office here.

During the meeting the Finance Minister called for greater interactions in the economic field of the two countries and said it is necessary to identify the areas of cooperation so that joint venture projects could be taken up in specific sectors. He spoke about the liberal investment policy of Bangladesh and said economic cooperation between the two countries should be on basis of mutuality of interest.

Mr. Saifur Rahman gave a resume of the existing trade imbalance between the two countries and said concerted efforts would have to be made to bridge up this gap.

Welcoming the Minister, the President of Chamber Mr. Mumtaz Ahmad said that a delegation of Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry would be visiting Bangladesh sometime next month.

On arrival in Calcutta, the Minister was received at the airport by West Bengal Finance Minister Dr. Asim Das Gupta and Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta.

The Minister left for Delhi this afternoon.

Talking to newsmen during his brief stopover here on his way for a two-day visit to Delhi Mr. Rahman said that the government of India as well as West Bengal should take a serious drive in this regard and formulate a common strategy along with Bangladesh so as to develop jute industries in their respective countries.

The minister urged the West Bengal government to impress upon the Government of India to import fertilizer, newsprint, Tangail and Jamdani sarees in bulk amount from Bangladesh so as to narrow the trade deficit which has mounted to 1.3 billion U.S. dollars.

He said that Bangladesh was importing several items from India in a one way traffic as a result of which import volume from this country had multiplied 11 times as much as the figure in 1980.

Mr. Rahman expressed the hope that the Government of India would give a serious thought to it so that both the countries could achieve "collective self-reliance" both in respect of economic development and trade industrial growth.

Gas Not Adequate To Supply to India

Replying to a question about the Bangladesh government's reported refusal to supply natural gas to West Bengal, Mr. Rahman said "we have no adequate gas to supply to other countries".

There was no possibility even in near future to supply such gas outside the country, Mr. Rahman said.

Referring to the proposal of supplying hilsa fish to West Bengal, which was ultimately not approved by the Government of India, Mr. Rahman said he would take up the matter with the Indian leaders in Delhi during his stay there.

Internal Affairs

Attempt Against Workers Party Leader Decried
93AS0087A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
21 Aug 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] The barbarous attempt on the life of Workers Party leader Mr. Rashed Khan Menon MP [member of Parliament] who was one of the chief architects of the mass upsurge of 1990 has made it amply clear that the law and order situation of the country is inextricably connected with politics. The target of the terrorists is now democracy and democratic forces.

The attempt to physically snuff out Rashed Khan Menon is a severe and rude jolt to the realm of politics of the country. The political arena is vocal in condemning and protesting this ugly terrorist act. There were rallies and processions that protested this criminal act. Statements were issued to the press by political leaders of all shades and everybody condemned this heinous attempt on Menon's life. The responsibility of the government in ensuring security of life has been pointed out very emphatically by different quarters.

The Awami League, Five-party Alliance, the "Nirmul Committee" and several other political organisations held a rally in front of the GPO [General Post Office] on Tuesday, August 18. They put the blame for this heinous crime squarely on organisations like Jamaat-Shibir, Freedom Party and Jubo Command. Jamaat reacted by saying that certain quarters seem to be suffering from incurable mental malady and they hold Jamaat responsible for any political offence. Shibir was no less sarcastic as they said a heinous attempt is on to put the blame of one on the shoulders of others. Freedom Party in a statement said confusion is worse confounded. A conspiracy is being hatched. This was an act of the "fifth columnists," the Freedom Party said. The Jubo Command claimed they didn't believe in terrorism.

Government termed the attempt on Menon's life as dastardly and barbarous and vowed to unearth the conspiracy and arrest the criminals connected with this crime. Police have already taken into custody Manirul Islam a former MP [member of Parliament] of the Jatiya Party and his younger brother, Jahirul [words indistinct] total of 15 persons have been held including these two. A special squad has also been formed to investigate the incident.

Rashed Khan Menon is in a prominent position in contemporary politics although his Workers Party is not a major organisation. The Five-party Alliance is also not a powerful political body. Rashed Khan Menon is the sole representative from this Alliance in Parliament. Despite this the Five-party Alliance and Rashed Khan Menon played an important role as a liaison between AL-led Eight-party Alliance and Seven-party Alliance led by BNP

[Bangladesh Nationalist Party] during the anti-Ershad mass upsurge. Many will say he is closer to BNP than Awami League.

Menon was an important critic of the autocratic regime and in this regard his was a distinctly independent role. And as he associated himself with the democratic movement, he, at times was critical of the Awami League as well as the government. Also he opposed the Jamaat-i-Islami as an active politician. During the election campaign Menon on several occasions had to work in close co-operation with the "Sarbaharas" and appease them. Observers say, on several occasions, he faced embarrassing situations in dealing with the members of the Sarbahara Party.

Menon incurred the displeasure of anti-democratic elements as he worked sincerely to consolidate the democratic process. We hope, the mystery of the inhuman and cruel attempt on his life will eventually unfold itself and then the nation will know who wanted to exterminate Menon, once for all, from the political arena of the country.

After the democratic process got started in the country some such new fangled and strange organisations that had no existence during the anti-autocracy movement have sprung up in the arena of politics. It is high time to see or judge thoroughly under whose political umbrella and financial support these diverse organisations are looming up in public. The muscle power which was once encouraged to spread in the society has not definitely melted into thin air with the fall of the autocratic rule. Even now they continue to receive fostering favour, succour and cooperation from their former patrons and mentors. Political circles believe that terrorist forces cannot last any longer without the financial support. Many are of the opinion that the wily and camouflaging anti-democracy forces are playing a trick to deceive cleverly the people by using their agents to foil democratic process. It is for the political reason that the law and order situation continues to deteriorate. A known political circle actuated by an atrocious design to weaken the democratic process is spreading despair in the society, expanding acts of terrorism and creating feud among the pro-democracy forces. On the eve of the collapse of autocratic rule it was learnt that a blue-print had been prepared to destroy some anti-Ershad democratic elements. It was reported that a list had also been made. But in the face of the turbulent movement that evil plan came to a naught. The government has to think seriously over the matter if the same plan that could not be implemented owing to the rapid change of the course of events that time is being carried out with a different strategy in the context of changed back-drop.

It is also learnt that some people belonging to the present government cultivate intimate friendship with some people of the fallen regime. Many are alarmed that this sort of intimacy may invite a terrible disaster for democracy. This very moment when the country is on the vital process of democratic transition the government has to be aware who have tons of easy money and who have the right contacts with armed people for encouraging political terrorism. The police and the intelligence agencies have to

prove their efficiency to deal with the political terrorism. What the country is witnessing is not just ordinary law and order situation.

Government Accused of Manipulating Investigations
92AS1539B Dhaka BANGLAR BANI in Bengali 27 Aug 92
p 4

[Article by Fakir Abdur Razzak: "Many Questions Are Arising Over Investigations' Lack of Bias, the Political Strategy Is To Control Everything"]

[Text] It is not surprising that those who are in politics sometimes become its victim. Rashed Khan Menon has now become a victim. But it is very unfortunate if anyone becomes its victim while in the intensive care unit of the Combined Military Hospital [CMH] with a fear of life and death. Menon has now become a political issue within the government. The government is playing a chess game in different ways with a serious thing like a murder attempt against Menon. Above all, the government charges the opposition groups by saying that they are trying to take advantage of this attempted murder of Menon. But the fact is that the police have not arrested any of the vicious criminals who were directly involved. And who is responsible for this failure—the police or the government's strategies? Leaving aside the sensible people of the society this question could also rise even in the minds of many intelligent police officers.

According to a press report a guideline was given to the police on behalf of the government policymakers at the beginning of the police investigation. Neither the home ministry nor any other authority objected to this report. Let us presume that the report was correct. The guideline stated that probably the followers of the Sarbahara Party, the Jatiya National Party, and the Awami League were involved in the attempted murder of Menon. The Sarbahara Party might have made this murder attempt because of the confusion or enmity that was created during Menon's election. The Jatiya Party and the Awami League might have made an attempt on Menon's life in order to gain some political advantage by destabilizing the government. The police started its campaign based on the type of guideline provided by a special government division. At first they arrested the people of the three above-mentioned groups and then detained an Indian national. In other words, they clouded the whole issue. The helpless people of the country understand this attempted murder in whatever way the government wants to show it. Rashed Khan Menon was shot 10 days ago. An eyewitness, who was the owner of a tea shop situated in front of the Workers Party, saw the whole incident. Kamal, the witness, said that he will surely recognize the culprit if they catch him. The police have also recorded his statement.

Haider Akbar Khan Rono, the plaintiff in Menon's attempted murder case, made a statement at the police station declaring the Juba [youth] Command the culprit. Complying with regulations, the police authorities took the initial step according to the petition filed by the complainant who suffered loss. After that only if the allegations of the complainant turn out to be untrue, are steps taken to search for another culprit. But that did not happen in this

case. The police did not arrest any member of the Juba Command for questioning even though only a few days ago Juba Command published in the newspaper a list of names of many political leaders, intellectuals, and artists, including Rashed Khan Menon, and declared its intention to wipe them out. Whoever adopts openly a plan to eradicate opposition groups is criminal in the eyes of the law. It is the duty of the police to take immediate steps in this regard. Not only have police authorities taken no such step, the government also has remained silent over this killing program of the Juba Command. Many writings were published in the newspapers on this issue and efforts made through statements of the political circle to get the attention of the government. Also, in Parliament many members, including Menon, raised questions about the commando program. But the government circle paid no heed. The men in power refused to take notice, even though the opposition groups stated loudly hundreds of times that the adoption of such a program by the Juba Command is a direct challenge to the existing rules, laws, and even the functioning of the established government. Just after the declaration of their program, Ratan Sen was brutally murdered in Khulna. Then Menon was attacked. Arranging the facts of the episode according to its own selfish political interests, the government has now started the investigation. On the other side, Menon, who is lying in the intensive care unit of the CMH, has not yet been able to overcome the crisis of life and death.

Who tried to murder Menon? Who is the real culprit? Which circle drew the blueprint? It is not possible to give an answer in one word from outside. On the assumption that an opposition group was responsible for the attempted murder, a petition was filed on behalf of the gravely injured person. However, all the sensible people of the country believe that if the police had conducted an inquiry into this attempted murder impartially and without influence, then someone among the real culprits would have been arrested within these past 10 days. Despite many criticisms of the police and restrictions against them, experienced people still believe that our police forces are capable of arresting the criminals. There are many earlier examples in this regard. A few days ago the investigating police authorities submitted a report to the prime minister on the progress made in their work and on recent arrests in the attempted murder case. Reading the reports in the newspapers many persons like me probably realized that in fact there was no progress. No information was received about the real culprits from the persons who were arrested on suspicion. A plain routine report was submitted to the prime minister. The Indian national who was arrested was nothing more than a smuggler and an illegal intruder and he will be finally identified.

However, within this period more than one minister of the government stated that the government had identified Menon's attackers and it had solved the mystery behind this attempted murder. It has now become clear that such a thing was said in order to confuse the people. The real culprits still remain outside the reaches of the government. But it seems that by bragging about progress, even though no progress has been made, the government has probably made good progress in the preparation of papers that will enable it to present to the people this incident of attempted

murder the way it wants. The ministers have launched their propaganda campaign, and call it progress.

On the other side, the government propagandizes that Menon's health has improved. Has Menon really escaped the crisis? Although the CMH doctors and specialists are saying nothing directly in this regard, the government media daily presents reports that his condition has improved. The doctors are sincerely making all possible efforts to save Menon, and they understand about the possible danger. Although the crafty ministers do not want to understand, there are many people in the society who know that it is contrary to medical ethics to declare a patient—who has undergone a serious surgery with damaged liver and lungs—out of danger within three, four, or 10 days or within a month. In fact, Menon's life-and-death situation has now entered into a big question mark. The people with selfish political interests are unable to realize this absolute truth. However, everyone should pray to the Creator for Menon. The latest report dated 23 and 24 [August] said that Menon's jaundice has increased tremendously. At that time the government propaganda machinery said that Menon's condition remained unchanged. In other words, his condition still remained improved as announced earlier. But the authorities did not say that his condition has quickly deteriorated, though it has deteriorated beyond control, in the past two days.

This makes it easy to understand that the government is not revealing his exact health condition to the people of the country and that it does not want to do so. But sensible people have rightly guessed that Rashed Khan Menon is not yet out of danger. The type of distress that continues in his body might take a turn for the worse at any time. Under these circumstances, a specialist from a foreign country should be invited to examine him. If possible, efforts should be made to send him abroad. The people of the country have no desire to risk Menon's life in order to gain for his treatment. The government should not try to gain any kind of cheap accolades by risking the life of such a national leader. The CMH specialists and doctors are our only hope. They can express their views in this matter after correctly evaluating their capabilities and limitations and the need for outside help. The people of the country have faith that they will not be a pawn to a political decision of the government.

It has been proved from the conduct of the investigation of this attempted murder of Menon that the dirty tricks of the people in power could be fatal to a dying politician. It is known from the latest reports that the Police Intelligence Department conducted the inquiry of the first seven days after this incident took place.

Thereafter changing the government decision, the responsibility for the investigation was given to the CID [Criminal Investigation Division]. The day the Intelligence Department handed over the responsibility to the CID, the Intelligence Department investigators said that the followers of the Sarbahara Party were involved in the attempted murder of Menon. But for the past seven days they did not give any definite information about the involvement of the Sarbahara Party either to the government or to the people of the country. Does the Intelligence Department think that the Sarbahara Party was involved

in the attempted murder of Menon, or has the government decided that the Sarbahara Party is responsible? If such is the decision, then the Intelligence Department has said the right thing and nothing will come out even after the transfer of responsibility to the CID. In other words, if the government does not remain impartial and sincere in the matter of attempted political murders or in the case of any complicated killings, then the real mystery will never be solved, and no police division will be able to find the real culprit.

Zia 'Crackdown' Deemed Risky Action

93AS0091A Madras THE HINDU in English 17 Sep 92
p 5

[Article by Haroon Habib: "Khaleda Zia Chooses Tough Option"]

[Text] Dhaka, Sept. 16—The crackdown on the musclemen of her own Bangladesh National Party [BNP], the banning of the central committee of its student wing, the arrest of the student wing president on charges of multiple murder, the raid on the controversial Freedom Party's headquarters and recovery of a huge cache of arms and ammunition—all these show that the Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, is trying to salvage her party's image in a desperate but risky attempt.

Although belated, the move by the ruling party to restore peace in the university campuses, particularly the violence-ridden Dhaka, and to flush out "armed terrorists" from elsewhere has been welcomed by the people. But things possibly will not move as desired by the Prime Minister, whose Cabinet is stated to be sharply divided as is the party, on the latest action of combating widespread terrorism.

The crackdown on her own students' organisation, the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the main base of Begum Khaleda, has evoked the anger of a powerful section of her Cabinet, which has termed the move as "suicidal". They openly say that by arresting a number of top JCD leaders, including its president, Mr. Ilias Ali, the Prime Minister had succumbed to the indirect pressure by her political opponents, who allege that the main prop of the pro-BNP students organisation was terrorism and unauthorised arms.

However a number of Ministers believe that without flushing out terrorists from her own party, the administration will lack the moral right to take action against terrorists in other parties.

Upsetting Action

Following a number of violent deaths on Dhaka University campus because of internal feuds the administration took a strong stand. This split the students' wing of the ruling party, one for and another against the drastic action. This may prove to be fatal as it will upset and excite a large section of anti-social elements, who actively took part in Begum Zia's political life for a long time.

Independent observers said the actions were necessary to suppress the violence following from misguided student

politics that had begun to harm the educational institutions and introduced a dangerous arms culture in politics.

The Khaleda Zia government is now acting tough against the terrorists and even ordered a probe into how student leaders accumulated wealth.

Raid on Freedom Party Base

A sensitive but bold action of the ruling party was the raid it authorised on the Dhanmandi headquarters of the Freedom Party, whose leaders claimed to have masterminded the assassination of Bangladesh's founding father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975.

In the raid on Sunday night, police arrested eight Freedom Party workers and recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition. The administration said the party, which now supports the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami, was engaged in illegal arms trade.

Press reports suggested that the Government had not only given the green signal to the law enforcing agencies to raid the party headquarters, but also to identify the locations where arms and ammunition are stored, illegally. Some sources say a number of key Freedom Party leaders may also be arrested soon.

The raid was conducted at a time when the main opposition, Awami League, supported by many other political parties and social and cultural organisations, was pressing for a ban on the Freedom Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami for their alleged activities which could jeopardise the country's independence. The Awami League and its allies also demanded that the leaders of the Freedom Party should be put on trial for killing the Father of the Nation and for murdering freedom fighters and pro-liberation forces.

Angry Reaction

In an angry reaction, the Freedom Party leader, Colonel Syed Faruq Rehman, who was rehabilitated in the country by the deposed President, Gen. H. M. Ershad in 1987 and remained a supporter of Begum Khaleda Zia mainly because he was rabidly anti-Awami League flayed the Prime Minister Monday for presiding over what he termed "a democratic autocracy". According to Col. Rehman, who seldom appears in public, the police swoop on his party office was "a dacoity."

"Begum Khaleda Zia may end like Ershad. Gen. Ershad came down on us in the eighth year of his reign. It took us one year to make him go," the Freedom Party chairman warned, predicting the Prime Minister's fall within a year.

In his usual sharp comments, Col. Rehman said at a press meet, "As far as I understand, no nationalist is with her. Begum Khaleda is making the same mistake as her husband did. I am busy organising my party, but they are instigating me. I do not see any politics in the next one year except chaos, and martial law or emergency."

Direct Beneficiary

Even if the Freedom Party sympathisers of Begum Zia's BNP refuse to speak out, it is understood that many in the

ruling party would not also approve of the action against it or against its leaders, because the political change in 1975 after a bloodbath that was conducted by Col. Rehman and his party, made the BNP a direct political beneficiary.

According to all independent analysts, Begum Khaleda Zia has opted for a tough stand because it is essential for curbing the deteriorating law and order situation. But, at the same time, the path chosen is equally risky. Her Cabinet on Monday approved of a new anti-terrorism ordinance, which the government wants to apply to bring the scale of violence down.

But will she be able to do it when her party is so divided or without mastering the wholehearted support of the opposition, which last month moved a no confidence motion against the government on law and order situation?

Faith in Democracy Urged Despite Corrupt Politicians

92AS1540A Dhaka BANGLAR BANI in Bengali 24 Aug 92
p 5

[Article by Mahmudur Manna: "Democracy and Ministers' Affected Speech"]

[Text] Many people are now feeling quite uneasy about the future of democracy in Bangladesh. After winning the election, the victorious party—the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party]—and its allies very skillfully launched a propaganda campaign that the problem in upholding democracy will come largely from the opposition parties. The Awami League is a big, organized political party and almost everyone assumed that it would win the election. In fact, the Awami League itself was very sure of it. But they could not win the election. It was expected that they would not easily accept the disgrace of this failure and under a different pretext create confusion and thereby jeopardize democracy. Because of its election victory, the hearts of the people accepted the BNP. As a result, to some extent, the party and the people have begun to communicate recently and even we cannot deny it. But as the days go by and the people watch the performance of the BNP government and its administration, their earlier views change.

About one and one-half years of the BNP administration have elapsed and that is not a very short time for any government with a five-year term. Now there is no way to stop evaluating it as an absolute government in its infancy. No stable minded, intelligent, and considerate person expected tremendous achievements from the BNP government in the one and one-half year period. But a question has arisen as to whether the BNP government is marching forward on the path of the expectations it developed in the minds of the people during the nine-year movement. In this one and one-half years, industrial and agricultural production has not increased, and no momentum has been built in the economy. Although after its budget presentation the government expressed hope for an improvement in the economy, the industrialists, businessmen, and the general public were not hopeful.

The price of essential commodities has increased. The day after the prime minister announced that the prices of

commodities were reduced as a result of the budget declarations, the Consumer Association of Bangladesh stated in its deliberations that the prices were hiked by 5.3 percent. A few weeks have passed since that time but the prices of commodities have not been reduced. On the contrary, they have increased further.

The law-and-order situation in the country is deteriorating at an alarming rate. There is not a single day when opening a newspaper one does not see one or two reports on ghastly muggings, murders, riots, and terrorism. Starting from educational premises, terrorism has now entered the residential areas via the marketplace and bus terminals. The whole country from Teknaf to Tentulia is today hostage to terrorism. Like breathing, terrorism is our companion each and every moment and there is no escaping it.

Having faith and confidence in democracy and not in the BNP, and even taking into account the overall backwardness of the country, its wasted culture and value, and the problems of so many years piled up, it has now become difficult to remain sympathetic toward this government. Personally I am not a BNP supporter. But considering the need for stability to cultivate democracy, I favored providing constructive criticism to the BNP government for five years. I am not declaring any change in my position; but sometimes I find it difficult to hold my patience for the acts and deeds of the government, especially of its ministers.

This government has a minister of information whose name is Najmul Huda. When Khaleda Zia formed a ministry under Justice Sahabuddin, I wrote an article about Najmul Huda in the weekly KHABARER KAGOJ entitled: "Discard This Man From the Council of Ministers." The readers might recall that at that time he made a remark in Parliament about Justice Sahabuddin, which only showed his disregard and disrespect toward Sahabuddin. Even today the whole nation respects Justice Sahabuddin for the political honesty he has demonstrated not for personal reasons, but as an interim president of the country. But Minister Nazmul Huda showed disrespect to him at that time.

Begum Khaleda Zia did not take any action against Najmul Huda. It is heard that Najmul Huda is one of those persons in whom the prime minister has confidence. I do not know her reasons for having such great confidence in him. One can become the confidant of another person not only in politics but also in personal, family, and professional fields. Since all five fingers on a hand are not even, all people are also not of the same type. The likes, dislikes, judgment, and intelligence of all people cannot be the same.

I have nothing to say about the personal likes and dislikes of the prime minister, and I also feel that no one should say anything in this regard. But if her personal likes or dislikes relate to the state, then definitely there is something to be talked about.

During the Ershad [a former president of Bangladesh] period there was a minister—Shah Moazzam Hussain—who gained notoriety for his slanderous tongue. Although Shah Moazzam has a long political tradition and also speaks well, he cannot gain popularity even in his own

party because of his unrestrained tongue. It is rumored that he might be eliminated from the position of general secretary at the next council meeting of the party.

Mao Zedong, the late Chairman of China, said that to speak is an act. Political leaders become known largely to the people from their talks. And it is a fact that talks generally reveal the inner side of the man. However, I won't say that there are no exceptions. Many warmhearted fellows are not modest in their talks, at the same time many crooks can speak very eloquently. It is not possible for millions of people to penetrate into the minds of the leaders. They judge a person from whatever is outwardly visible.

I cannot say what type of person barrister Najmul Huda is and why our prime minister likes him so much. But it is a fact that Najmul Huda is uttering things that are really very painful. He shows his displeasure in everything and tries to present himself as a very wise man. Because of this it has become difficult to understand the government's policy. It looks like an autocratic government. The scene he created while speaking about Abdus Samad Azad—the deputy opposition leader—was really worth noting. Then he looked very haughty.

Presuming that the gentleman lacked a sense of proportion, the matter could be taken lightly. But when he expressed his desire to discard the accreditation cards of the journalists because they (the newspapers and the journalists) publish false and cooked-up stories, at that time it seemed that a ghost of autocracy had built up a nest in his vocal cords. What is the measuring rod used by the information minister to judge right from wrong? We know without his saying that he looks at right or wrong from his own position. A few months ago addressing a seminar entitled: "The Autonomy for Radio and Television," organized by the joint cultural groups at the Press Club, he very openly said that radio and television belong to the government and they will therefore reflect the views of the government. We are now the government and, therefore, our views should get priority.

The information minister also talked about the cult and dogma of parliamentary politics. Where does it now stand when his current views [on radio and television] are linked with his statement on cult and dogma? It becomes that whatever they say is true. [sentence as published] Will the prime minister take steps if false propaganda is launched against the opposition party? We say take a step up and then only will your sincere intentions be known. However, there is an instance when a daily newspaper publishing sheer cooked-up stories on the opposition leader openly begged for her forgiveness. But in your case such a thing has never happened. [sentence as published]

At the current session of the Parliament, Tofail Ahmed—a shrewd Awami League parliamentarian—recited an Urdu poem that said: "A loin cloth is more than enough to ruin a floral garden." It is similar to what we say in Bengali, that a drop of kerosene is sufficient to spoil a quart of milk. It was said during the Pakistani regime that one Monem [a noted politician from erstwhile East Pakistan] was more than enough to destroy Ayub Khan [a former president of Pakistan]. During the Ershad period, similar references

were made about Shah Moazzam Hussain. What about Khaleda Zia's time? Tofail has mentioned only one loin cloth, but people see more than one.

Home Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury is generally a man of few words. He was a sincere participant and an organizer of the earlier nine-year movement and personally a very amiable person. He attended practically all of the meetings of the liaison committee in the long period of the movement and we have never noticed any commotion caused from his speeches. Even after becoming the interior minister his tongue has remained under control. But after the attack on the journalists at the Press Club on 21 June Matin—who has struggled for democracy—has been transformed into a minister for the terrorists. Much has already been said about the statement he made about the Press Club incident. What else could we call his statement in Parliament on the current law-and-order situation besides simply startling? During the movement we have noticed that he was a pleasant person and liked humor. I did not meet him again after he became the minister and therefore cannot understand whether he has made humorous remarks on the existing law-and-order situation. When people's lives are threatened with collapse because of the rage of terrorism, he asks: "When have you ever lived more peacefully? I have set up an island of peace in Bangladesh and for it I should get a promotion."

According to press reports the prime minister has warned the ministers that they should keep their tongues under control. Khaleda Zia has done a good thing. But has anyone pointed out to the prime minister that at times her tongue also becomes uncontrolled? Is there anyone who can say that to her?

Everyone should be cultured in his or her behavior and utterances in the interest of better progress for democracy and the need to give democracy an institutionalized shape. This is the expectation of all sensible human beings.

Government Ban on Student Politics Ridiculed

92AS1540B Dhaka SANGBAD in Bengali 27 Aug 92 p 4

[Article by Sufiya Shahid: "Bangladesh's Student Politics: Our Expectations"]

[Text] I have never supported the view that student politics should be banned in Bangladesh, although at different times questions in this regard were and are being raised. The history of student politics is not new in our country and it has an old glorious chapter. Still then, why is this question being raised? An answer is easily available from an analysis of the existing situation and in that case the scale might probably tilt in favor of banning the students politics. But if we look at the past history of student politics in Bangladesh without remaining confined to the present situation, any sensible person will hesitate to give his verdict in favor of ending student politics.

From 1952 to 1990, that is, for the then Pakistan time, there was a glorious history of the student politics in Bangladesh. During this period the student community provided successful leadership to each and every movement and made the highways red by freely sacrificing their blood for their cause of achieving their national rights.

They gave birth to some of the movements and for some others whenever the indecisiveness and disagreement among the national leadership brought the movements to the point of failure, the student community, forgetting their own differences, unitedly and steadfastly enhanced their momentum and also made them successful. The mass movement of 1990 is an excellent example. Therefore, we really feel good in being proud of the students who played and are still playing leading roles.

But there is another side where a black history of our student politics has taken its place and each chapter of that history is painful. We feel pain when noticing that our student community is marching toward a dangerous chapter by following the path of student politics. Under the influence of blind insanity they involved themselves in a bloody game. It seems amazing even to imagine that the same people who by sacrificing their mutual disputes came down the streets shoulder to shoulder to join a movement to realize their national rights, could get involved in a killing game by upholding petty, personal, or party differences. It is like playing a "Slave of life and death," game. [sentence as published] We are witnessing daily the dangerous consequences of this game. One after the other, the hearts of many mothers are becoming empty. Hopeful lives, whose futures could be bright with their own genius and could also give a lot to the nation, are being wiped out. Thus, the loss of these children is not only a loss for their parents but also a loss for the nation because they were its treasures. When the reports on the death of students appear one after the other in the pages of newspapers, some questions crop up in our minds: Is the value of human life so little? Who will give an account to the nation for the deaths—one after the other—of young people, who were the hopes of the future? Are they responsible for their own deaths? Or is there a remote control in some invisible person's hand?

A sensible, intelligent society never wants or accepts that its student community remains engaged in killing each other. Thus, we feel pain to see the student community engaged in violence. We regret, but still accept it because there is nothing for us to do. Those who can do something, play either the role of a silent spectator or pretend that they have not seen anything and accomplish their own end. This only brings a loss to society, the nation, and the people. To the selfish elements, personal gain is more important than the gain of the nation and its people. The general student body is today vigilant of those selfish elements, who in the name of politics, keep the students involved in the killing game and continue their fishing in muddy waters. As proof, we often notice antiterrorist protest marches of the general student bodies in different educational institutions including college campuses. They do not want terrorism in educational institutions nor do they want to see their own brothers in the role of murderers. This does not mean they are against student politics. They want a wonderful quiet atmosphere in the educational institutions where side by side with education they will have political discussions. It will be a place where life for everyone will be ensured and instead of arms, the students will carry in their hands all the means for gaining education and knowledge and those means will work in

turn as a medium for the expression of their thoughts and protests in the political field.

The sensible, prudent society, including the ordinary students in the educational institutions, do not want to hear the clanking of arms in the hands of the students. Why are the weapons still in the hands of the students? From where and how are the arms coming? Who is giving arms to the students? Isn't there a way to stop this evil activity? Is there nothing that the administration can do in this regard? For what attraction are the students running in this direction? It is not difficult to find answers to these questions. It is often seen that a student is being killed for occupying a dorm room or a students' hall or for continuing a trifle incident at a party, and in retaliation another student is murdered. This trend continues. In addition, another thing was recently noticed in the student politics and that is the creation of a subparty within a party. As a result, to gain leadership the supporters of one group of the same party are being killed by another group. This is really very disgraceful for student politics. Couldn't the leaders at the central level of the party willingly stop this type of party feud? If not, then I will say that they lack a sincere desire to resolve the problems.

The fight for leadership could be brought under the sphere of student politics. But what should we call it when one group engages itself in a killing game with another for the occupation of a college hall? It could be also called a fight for leadership because here too exists the greed for the expansion of authority. Although indirectly, politics is also linked with it. The history of such politics cannot be under any circumstances important or beneficial to us. We always remain alarmed and panicky because we might have to hear again the woeful cries of a mother. We do hear repeatedly those cries of pain, but instead of warning the student community, they make them more violent and retaliatory. But why? If we search for an answer to this question, we might discover the existence of an invisible controller.

In conclusion, one thing should be said. The student community has today become desperate in the fight for leadership. They do not care at all where they will give their leadership. Could we expect a peaceful, nice, and pleasant atmosphere in the areas, which they always keep trembling with the clanking of their arms? Is gaining that leadership such a tempting thing? That leadership is now going to become eligible to obtain an entry permit to hell with a passport from heaven. [sentence as published] However, to those who are engaged in this killing game to achieve leadership, I will remind them of the historic saying of John Milton. In his *Paradise Lost* Milton said: "It is better to reign in Hell than to serve in Heaven." Milton's statement is quite important. He despised reigning as a puppet in the hands of those in power because existence there would depend on the contentment of the superiors, which, in other words, is slavery. Rather than being a slave and enjoying heavenly pleasure in this manner, it is far better to reign in a hellish atmosphere where, without being a slave to another person, one sets up his own freedom and value system. Our students should be conscious in this regard and through their own sacrifice, patience, and individuality, they should change the hellish

atmosphere to heavenly grandeur. We do not expect from them politics of killing and retaliation. We do not want that student community, by being a puppet in the hands of others, to be engaged in bloody fights among themselves. It is not always a requirement to shed blood to stand in the flow of blood. Sometimes one has to take the initiative to stop the shedding of blood even while standing in its flow. Therefore, we want our student community to cultivate politics in a better way. We wish to see a repetition of their past glorious role.

New Damage Suit Filed Against Ershad
93AS0093A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 27 Aug 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] A 12-crore taka damage suit was filed against former President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, Begum Rawshan Ershad and three others by Antazuddin Ahmed, a renowned businessman and his wife Hosne Ara Ahmed, reports UNB.

The plaintiffs in their application said their houses in Gulshan and Dilu Road in Dhaka city were illegally declared abandoned in 1988. The Gulshan house was turned into office of the then first lady Begum Rawshan Ershad and the Dilu Road house was allotted to her relative Monsura Mohiuddin.

Moreover, the application said Antazuddin Ahmed was detained under the Special Powers Act and falsely implicated in a number of criminal cases. This has caused enormous loss to his business and mental torture.

He was not released from the detention by Ershad government despite order from the High Court on a writ petition filed by him.

This was done as Antazuddin had refused to carry out an illegal order of the former president, the application said.

Hosne Ara Ahmed who is co-owner of the property declared abandoned by the Ershad government is a resident of America.

The other defendants in the case are S. M. Rahmatullah, ex-chairman of [passage illegible], Mohammad Ali, ex-secretary [passage illegible] and [passage illegible], ex-secretary, Ministry of Works.

After hearing both sides, sub-judge of the 1st court Shahidul Haq issued order allowing defence counsels Nitai Roy Chowdhury and Mostafa Jamal to consult Ershad who is now in Dhaka Central Jail in connection with the case.

Ershad has been sentenced to 13 years in jail for keeping illegal arms and amassing wealth beyond known sources of his income. He is facing more than a dozen other corruption cases.

Joint Economic Commission With India Reviewed
92AS1539A Dhaka SANGBAD in Bengali 27 Aug 92 p 4

[Editorial: "Indo-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission"]

[Text] Indian Foreign Secretary Jyotindra Nath Dixit came on a two-day routine visit to Bangladesh. The main objective of his visit was to prepare for the visits of two

Indian ministers—Vidya Charan Shukla and Raghu Nandan Lal Bhatia. One significant result of his visit is that at a high-level meeting with Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman he was able to advance the possibility of reviving and increasing the effectiveness of the Indo-Bangladesh joint economic commission. R.L. Bhatia, the Indian minister of state for external affairs, will come to Dhaka in October to participate in the joint commission.

After remaining inactive for a long time, this commission had a meeting in New Delhi in May 1990. Previously, a session was held on 1-2 December 1986. Bangladesh took the initiative for the 1990 meeting. Although there were prolonged discussions at these meetings, little was accomplished that affected economic and trade relations between the two countries.

Under the present government, some significant steps have been taken toward improving Indo-Bangladesh relations. A mutual solution was found for the Tin Bigha corridor issue. During Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's India visit she expressed a desire to resolve bilateral issues. At the time of the commerce minister's visit to New Delhi the Indo-Bangladesh trade agreement was further extended by three years. Negotiations have started on the problem of water distribution.

The political problems existing between India and Bangladesh still await solution. These problems do not justify a lack of improvement in economic and trade relations, especially when it is necessary to find a solution to our trade imbalance with India. One of our government officials revealed that our trade deficit with India, from 1972-73 to the present, is \$13 billion, and is increasing. In a year we import goods worth 3 to 4 billion taka from India, but find it extremely difficult to export 10 percent of that amount to India.

The economic situation has changed in the past two years in India and Bangladesh. Reforms have started in both countries regarding free-market economy and reduction in government control. Because of this, the joint economic commission will have special significance to Bangladesh. Moreover, it is hoped that SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] will give a lot of attention to the development of trade relations at the ensuing summit meeting.

The expansion of trade between the two countries is profitable to everyone. Whether or not the authorities like it, the illegal mutual black market trade has continued with full force. Due to our weak economic foundation, we are suffering from this black market trade.

We are being defeated in exporting our products through the legal channels to the huge Indian market. The standard, packing and production expenses of the Bangladesh products are not suitable to the export market. Our manufacturers do not pay any attention to the production side. We have lagged behind in the export trade because of the government's topsy-turvy policy, expensive manufactured equipment, and lack of cooperation between the government and businessmen. Bangladesh can acquire different types of trade benefits from the joint economic commission, but there too everything will depend on the diligence

of our businessmen and industrialists. We will be economically wiped out unless we can build an export-oriented economy. Our businessmen can prove their competence by exporting goods to next-door India. The government can only create the scope for it.

Various proposals for Indian investment in Bangladesh have come before the joint commission, but no substantive result has been achieved. Our finance minister has regretfully said that no new [Indian] investment has been made in the past year. The reasons for it are known to everyone. If we cannot encourage our local investors, then how can

the Indian investors agree to invest. Therefore, to attract foreign investment, the investment climate in the country should be improved, and that is the job for the government.

Also, preparation should be made for holding a discussion at the joint commission on the future of investments. However, at this moment the main topic should be how to increase our exports to India. We hope that the joint economic commission will be able to play a significant role in this regard.

Bangladesh-Malaysian Joint Panel Meets
93AS0089A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 27 Aug 92 p 10

[Text] Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman and his Malaysian counterpart Datuk Abdullah Bin Haji Ahmad Badawi signed agreed minutes in Dhaka on Wednesday at the conclusion of the first meeting of Bangladesh-Malaysia Joint Commission, reports BSS.

Earlier the JC [Joint Commission] was set up under Economic and Technical Cooperation agreement signed by the two Ministers.

The two Ministers in their inaugural speeches had given directives to their respective delegations for identifying areas of mutual cooperation and promoting common interest particularly in expansion of trade between the two countries, shipping services, joint venture industries and investment, banking cooperation, technical cooperation, cultural relations, recognition of degree of medical colleges in Bangladesh, recruitment of Bangladeshi Manpower, tourism, coconut palm, other palm and tree plantation project in Bangladesh and religious matters.

The officials led by Dr. AMM Shawkat Ali, Additional Secretary, Economic Relations Division on Bangladesh side and Ambassador Dato' Abdul Halim Bin Ali, Deputy Secretary-General-I of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the Malaysian side had detailed two-day discussions on specific items and reached decisions on mutual cooperation in all of the above areas.

Accordingly, the agreed minutes were drawn up and signed by the two Ministers.

It was decided that the next meeting of the Bangladesh-Malaysia Joint Commission would be held in Kuala Lumpur in 1993.

UNB adds: Malaysia is interested in employing more Bangladeshis in both public and private sectors.

The visiting Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Bin Haji Ahmad Badawi conveyed his country's interest to Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan during a meeting at the Secretariat on Wednesday morning.

Income Earned From Workers Abroad Assessed
93AS0086A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
23 Aug 92 pp 1, 3

[Text] The country is likely to earn Taka 2,500 crore annually if the present annual rate of employment of one lakh people from Bangladesh in eight Middle Eastern countries and Gulf states continues.

According to a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) recently, the annual outflow of job seekers increased from 5,000 in 1976 to more than one lakh as the nineties began. Eight Middle Eastern countries including Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) account for 98 percent of total migration from the country.

The study shows that among the individual countries, Saudi Arabia has been the most important destination for Bangladeshi workers accounting for about 38 percent of total expatriates to the region during 1977-90. Other major destinations, according to the study, are UAE, Oman whose shares were 14 and 12 percent respectively. The study points out that Bangladeshi youths now prefer Japan and newly industrialised countries like Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore for seeking jobs. The countries concerned are reportedly recruiting Bangladeshi workers in view of shortage of workers and the availability of Bangladeshis at reasonable wages.

The study indicates that the share of professional and skilled workers have been declining in the Middle Eastern countries in recent years. The share of professionals accounted for about six percent during 1990. The survey shows that 75 percent of expatriates in U.K. hold blue-collar jobs and are mainly engaged as industrial workers.

According to an estimate, the amount of remittances increased steadily over the last 15 years from less than 60 million dollars in 1977 to 764 million dollars in 1991. The relative importance of different countries regarding these remittances has undergone a major transportation.[as published]

In 1977, the contribution of Middle Eastern countries was about 20 percent, while that of four countries—U.K., U.S.A., Canada and former West Germany was 77 percent. Other countries' contribution constituted only three percent.

The study shows that the share of Middle Eastern countries rose to 63 percent in 1990 while the share of four western countries fell to 19 percent.

The study indicates that the remittances from manpower were relatively high till 1991. Thereafter earnings from garments exceeded those from manpower exports.

The study points out some defects in the manpower export policy of the government. It points out bottlenecks in recruitment of Bangladeshi workers. These are delay in procedural formalities, breach of contracts in manpower recruitment by the employers, and lack of cooperation of Bangladeshi labour attaches in the Middle Eastern countries and Gulf states and these hurdles are largely responsible for relatively low outflow of migration from Bangladesh. Sources said that the Middle Eastern countries are putting new restrictions on recruiting manpower from Bangladesh following availability of workers from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka at much lower prices. Besides, recruiting agents in Pakistan, India, Thailand and Philippines are more active in recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from their respective countries.

Talking to a manpower recruiting agent this correspondent learnt that Bangladesh could reap the benefit of increased quota of manpower to Saudi Arabia if visa and travel restrictions were relaxed immediately. The same agent said that the governments of both Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh should sort out the problems to facilitate the flow of manpower to Saudi Arabia in near future.

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